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PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECT OF TANNIN FROM TEA

M. Yakovlev

[The results reported here would find applications in dietetics wherever shortages of Vitamin C occur (for instance, in the Arctic); also in aviation medicine and other fields concerned with exposure to sudden changes of pressure.]

Under the direction of A. L. Kursanov, Corresponding Member, Academy of Sciences USSR, an investigation of the effects of tannin from tea on animals was carried out at the Institute of Biochemistry imeni A. M. Bakh.

It was found in the course of this investigation that the blood vessels of white mice which received small quantities of tea tannin with their food became stronger and were not injured when the animals were exposed to abrupt changes of pressure. Normally, such pressure changes cause rupture of the vessels.

Furthermore, the tannin reinforces the action of Vitamin C. It is known that guinea pigs afflicted with scurvy seldom survive. Even when ten times the normal dosis of Vitamin C is supplied to the diseased animals, their bodies do not retain the vitamin. When small quantities of tannin were added to the diet, Vitamin C was retained and the animals recovered.

The physiological effects of tea tannin may find important applications in human medicine. An experimental study of the question has already been launched. If the clinical results are favorable, Soviet medicine will have at its disposal a new, very important remedy.

Tannin may be extracted not only from young shoots which serve as a raw material for the production of tea, but also from by-products of tea manufacture which cannot be utilized in the latter manner.

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